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***Al Jazeera America/
Monmouth University Poll***

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Released:
Monday, January 19, 2015, 9:00am

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NATIONAL: FEW SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN RACE RELATIONS UNDER OBAMA

Integration not as important as opportunity

The *Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll* finds that nearly all Americans agree that racial discrimination continues to be a problem for the nation, but they are divided by race on whether greater social integration is an important element in fixing the problem. The national poll – the first conducted by Al Jazeera America, with Monmouth University – also found that Americans, by a nearly 3-to-1 margin, are more likely to say that race relations have worsened rather improved since Barack Obama moved into the White House.

Fully 8-in-10 Americans agree that racial and ethnic discrimination is a problem in the United States, with half (51%) saying it is a big problem, and 30% saying it is a small problem. About 2-in-3 blacks (69%) and Latinos (66%) say discrimination is a big problem, while just under half of whites (45%) feel the same.

As the nation's first black president starts his seventh year in office, very few (15%) Americans feel that race relations have gotten better since Barack Obama's became president compared to 4-in-10 (43%) who they have gotten worse. Another 40% say there has been no change in race relations under Obama. Blacks (31%) and Latinos (24%) are slightly more likely than whites (9%) to say race relations have gotten better since Obama, but the difference is not overwhelming. In fact, black Americans are evenly divided – 31% say race relations have gotten better, 31% say they have gotten worse, and 37% say there has been no change during Obama's tenure.

The public is also divided on the role Pres. Obama has played on race issues. One-quarter (25%) say he has been too outspoken and one-quarter (28%) say he has been too quiet, while 4-in-10 (39%) say he has struck the right tone. Black Americans (68%) are more likely than white (36%) and Latino (32%) Americans to feel that the president has struck the right tone on race relations. Among black Americans

only, about half (49%) say it is time for new leadership in the black community while 1-in-3 (35%) say that the civil rights era leaders are still effective spokespersons.

“The black community expresses support for the president, but there is also an undercurrent that race relations have not progressed as far as they had hoped in the past six years,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, which conducted the *Al Jazeera America / Monmouth University Poll*.

The poll found differences of opinion among the races on what approaches are needed to eliminate racial discrimination. Fifty years after the Selma march led to passage of the Voting Rights Act, nearly all Americans – regardless of race – agree that equality of opportunity is very important, but they are less convinced about the need for greater integration in our daily life. Overall, 84% of Americans say that it is very important for people of all races to have equality of opportunity, but just 1-in-3 (36%) feel the same about having more racially integrated neighborhoods in our local communities. Fully 6-in-10 (59%) blacks feel that social integration is very important, but fewer Latinos (47%) and only 1-in-4 whites (28%) feel the same.

Nearly 1-in-4 (23%) Americans say they would actively seek out a mixed race neighborhood if they had to move to a new community, while 14% say they would prefer to move to a community where most people are the same race as them. Most Americans (61%) express no preference for the racial mix of their new neighborhood if they had to move. Half (50%) of black Americans are the most likely to say they would seek out a mixed race neighborhood. This compares to 29% of Latinos and 15% of whites who say the same. In fact white Americans are just as likely to say they would look for a same race neighborhood (17%) as they are to say they would look for a mixed race community (15%) if they had to move.

Just over half (53%) of Americans say they are very comfortable talking about race in public, such as at work or parties, including 52% of whites, 53% of blacks and 52% of Latinos. It’s worth noting that only 13% of whites say that most of their friends are of different races, while nearly 4-in-10 (41%) blacks and a majority (56%) of Latinos report that their circle of friends is mainly multi-racial. This may suggest that whites are less likely to find themselves in situations where they would be talking about race in multi-cultural company.

The *Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from January 13 to 15, 2015 with 1,003 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J. and cosponsored by Al Jazeera America in New York, N.Y.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. If you had to move to a new community, would you be [CHOICES 1 & 2 WERE ROTATED] more likely to look for a neighborhood where there is a mix of races, OR more likely to look for a neighborhood where most of the people are the same race ... or would you equally consider living in either type of neighborhood?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Mix of races	23%	15%	25%	28%	20%	27%	32%	20%	19%	15%	50%	29%
Most are same race	14%	21%	11%	11%	18%	10%	8%	15%	18%	17%	7%	9%
Either	61%	60%	63%	60%	60%	62%	60%	63%	59%	67%	41%	61%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	4%	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%	2%	4%	2%	1%	0%

2. Do you think that racial and ethnic discrimination in the United States is a problem or not a problem? [If PROBLEM: Is it a big problem or a small problem?]

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Yes, big problem	51%	41%	50%	61%	50%	53%	58%	52%	44%	45%	69%	66%
Yes, small problem	21%	24%	20%	20%	22%	20%	19%	21%	22%	21%	18%	15%
Yes, not sure	9%	6%	11%	7%	9%	9%	8%	7%	11%	11%	4%	7%
No, not a problem	18%	27%	18%	10%	18%	17%	14%	18%	21%	21%	9%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%

[QUESTIONS 3 & 4 WERE ROTATED]

3. How important is it that all races have equal opportunities – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very important	84%	81%	85%	85%	84%	84%	89%	86%	77%	84%	89%	85%
Somewhat important	12%	13%	11%	12%	10%	14%	7%	11%	18%	13%	5%	12%
Not too important	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Not at all important	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%

4. How important is it to have more racially integrated neighborhoods in our local communities – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very important	36%	23%	38%	46%	35%	38%	45%	33%	32%	28%	59%	47%
Somewhat important	37%	38%	37%	36%	32%	42%	33%	37%	40%	41%	23%	34%
Not too important	15%	22%	11%	13%	17%	12%	14%	16%	14%	16%	13%	11%
Not at all important	10%	16%	11%	4%	13%	7%	6%	13%	11%	12%	5%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	0%	0%

5. Have race relations in the United States become better or worse since Barack Obama became president, or has there been no change?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Better	15%	4%	13%	28%	16%	14%	21%	11%	14%	9%	31%	24%
Worse	43%	62%	43%	25%	44%	41%	32%	47%	49%	47%	31%	35%
No change	40%	33%	41%	45%	38%	42%	45%	40%	35%	42%	37%	38%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%

6. Do you think President Obama [CHOICES 1 & 2 WERE ROTATED] – has been too outspoken on race issues, has been too quiet on race issues – or has he struck the right balance on race issues?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Too outspoken	25%	36%	26%	13%	30%	20%	21%	26%	27%	29%	9%	22%
Too quiet	28%	34%	28%	21%	28%	27%	27%	27%	29%	27%	19%	35%
Right balance	39%	22%	36%	57%	33%	45%	44%	39%	34%	36%	68%	32%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	8%	10%	8%	10%	8%	9%	9%	9%	8%	3%	12%

7. How comfortable are you speaking openly about your views on race issues when you are at work, at parties or in public— are you very, somewhat, not too, or not at all comfortable speaking openly about race?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very comfortable	53%	53%	54%	51%	58%	48%	51%	60%	47%	52%	53%	52%
Somewhat comfortable	30%	29%	29%	32%	25%	34%	37%	23%	31%	31%	32%	28%
Not too comfortable	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	13%
Not at all comfortable	7%	7%	8%	7%	6%	9%	3%	8%	11%	8%	4%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	0%

8. How many of your close friends, outside of work, are a different race than you – all of them, most of them, some of them, hardly any of them, or none of them?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
All of them	8%	4%	11%	8%	7%	9%	16%	7%	3%	3%	6%	22%
Most of them	18%	16%	21%	16%	19%	18%	20%	23%	11%	10%	35%	34%
Some of them	52%	54%	50%	56%	53%	51%	48%	53%	55%	60%	42%	37%
Hardly any of them	14%	16%	12%	14%	14%	14%	10%	12%	19%	19%	8%	4%
None of them	6%	8%	5%	6%	5%	8%	5%	4%	10%	7%	8%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%

[The following question was asked only of black respondents: n=104, moe=+/-9.6%]

9. Thinking about leadership in the black community, do you think the civil rights era leaders are still effective spokespersons for the community or is it time for a different kind of leadership?

	TOTAL
Still effective spokespersons	35%
Time for a different kind of leadership	49%
(VOL) Both	8%
(VOL) Don't know	8%

The Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll was sponsored by Al Jazeera America and the Monmouth University Polling Institute. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The poll was conducted from January 13 to 15, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,003 adults age 18 and older. This includes 673 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 330 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
26% Rep	49% Male	31% 18-34	65% White
44% Ind	51% Female	38% 35-54	12% Black
30% Dem		31% 55+	15% Hispanic
			8% Asian/Other

	MARGIN OF ERROR											
	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic	
Unweighted N	1,003	250	478	267	487	516	198	295	508	767	99	80
moe	3.1%	6.2%	4.5%	6.0%	4.5%	4.3%	7.0%	5.7%	4.4%	3.5%	9.9%	11.0%

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